

They further said in their letter, "In our view, it would be a tragedy if Chris Smith left the chairmanship" of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The Speaker of this House and the leadership of this House ignored all of these 10 national veterans organizations, and they not only removed the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) as the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; they removed him from the committee entirely, a committee that he had served on for 24 years. Why did they do this? They did it because the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is an advocate for veterans. He had the gall to speak up and to speak out and say we should do what we have promised to do and provide our veterans with the health care they need. And the leadership of this House would not tolerate that kind of insubordination. So this good man was stripped of the Chair's position and removed from the committee.

Let me say something about the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the person. In my judgment, he is the most pro-life advocate in this House of Representatives. I do not agree with the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) on every issue, but I can tell the Members that he is a true conservative. He is an advocate for the unborn. He is an advocate for human rights not only here in this country but around the world. And if this Republican leadership would do this to their own, one can only imagine how they may respond to others who would challenge anything the leadership may want them to do.

We are elected to come here by about 630,000 people. At least I think I have 631,000 constituents in my district of Ohio. We are elected to come here as independently elected representatives of the people that vote for us, and our responsibility is to speak up and to speak out. Benjamin Franklin has said, If you act like sheep, the wolves will eat you. And I would just like to say to my Republican colleagues who sat by and let the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) be treated the way he was treated by their leadership, if they can do it to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), they can do it to any one of them. And if they act like sheep, if they go along to get along or to protect themselves or to keep from being punished by their leadership, they will lose the ability to be an effective advocate for the people who sent them here to represent them.

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, tonight is another historic opportunity for the President to give direction to this country through the State of the Union address. I know we will all be watching, and we will all be hoping that he provides the kind of direction that we need, both internationally and domestically.

Internationally he certainly deserves credit for the kind of turnout that was experienced in Iraq. It was at least equal to, if not more than, most people expected. He still needs to reassure us that there is a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq and that, in fact, he has plans to make this a safer world by dealing with truly critical situations in North Korea, in Russia in terms of its retreat to greater control of the economy and the society through a more repressive attitude. And particularly in light of the fact that there are still thousands of nuclear warheads in Russia, we need to make sure through programs such as the Nunn-Lugar bill that those nuclear warheads will never be accessible to terrorist groups.

There are a great many challenges internationally. Hopefully, he will rise to the occasion and provide leadership in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, which is still the prism through which most Arabs and Muslims really throughout the world view our willingness and determination to provide balanced, just, and effective leadership in bringing about the kind of economic and social interdependence that will stabilize that part of the world and protect Israel from its enemies and enable Israel to continue to be a true democracy and, in fact, a model for the other regimes in that area in terms of full democratic participation.

These are all important objectives internationally, and we trust that the President will provide the kind of leadership we need, and I am confident that the Democrats will hold him fully accountable for the results in 4 years.

But we start out now with a President that has just been elected with a clear majority, something that did not happen 4 years ago. We need to work together. And what we are told on the domestic front is that the emphasis is going to be upon deficit reduction and primarily upon reforming the Social Security system. This is not where the emphasis needs to be in terms of the Social Security program.

Clearly, the budget deficit is in a crisis situation. We need leadership to lead us out of that crisis situation. We are currently spending 20 percent of the gross domestic product and bringing in only 16.8 percent in revenue. The President needs to show us where he is going to be able to come up with the kind of revenue to match the spending. The President, we suspect, if past is prologue, is going to identify a number of domestic programs; but all told those domestic programs, if we would

eliminate all of them with the exception of the defense budget, they do not equal the amount of the annual deficits. So we need some clear plans on how we are going to reduce this deficit, hopefully through a PAYGO plan that requires offsets against tax cuts as well as spending increases.

But I want to emphasize particularly the Social Security program. The President is going to suggest it is in crisis. Mr. Speaker, it is not in crisis. In fact, he needs to reassure the American people that there is plenty of money currently in the Social Security system to take us out at least to the year 2052, according to the Congressional Budget Office; and there is enough to provide 73 percent of the benefits for another 40-plus years.

Right now we have about \$1.7 trillion in reserves. That amount is going to go up by hundreds of billions each year so that we will have over \$4 trillion in reserves by 2015. By 2018 it starts to tip as my generation, the baby boom generation, starts to retire, and then we need to make some plans for the future. But let me suggest that the tax cuts that we have enacted in 2001 and 2003 total 2 percent of the gross domestic product. The Social Security system needs only 4/10 of 1 percent to cover the shortfall for the next 75 years. Even the taxes just on the top 1 percent are 6/10 of 1 percent more than we need to cover the Social Security shortfall.

That is where the emphasis needs to be. We trust that the President will provide that kind of leadership this evening.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 64) and I ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 64

Resolved, That the following Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on the Budget: Mr. Crenshaw to rank after Mr. Ryun of Kansas; Mr. Wicker to rank after Mr. Putman and Ms. Ros-Lehtinen to rank after Mr. Hensarling.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.